

ADD Facts

18 Apr 1985

Dr. Kitty Ferguson

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is the latest name for what used to be called minimal brain damage or hyperactivity. The old names are misleading as not all children with ADD are hyperactive and many are very bright. ADD is common: you can expect one or two kids with ADD in the average classroom. It can also have very serious consequences for the child and his family.

Children with ADD are not in control of their own behavior. They cannot focus their attention and are easily distracted. They impulsively act before they can think about what they are doing. As a result they have problems with school work and tend to get into trouble. They mean well and try hard but are easily frustrated. Sometimes, parents, teachers and friends have a hard time getting along with them. Many of these kids are unjustly labeled a "bad", "stupid" or "lazy" and unfortunately after a few years they begin to believe it. That is the real tragedy.

The best description I have ever heard of ADD came from an 8 year old boy I had just begun on treatment. He said that before (treatment), his brain was like a

broken radio that picked up several stations at once. I'll never forget his beaming face as he said, "Now my radio is fixed and I can choose what I want to pay attention to."

Try to imagine all the information entering your brain all the time through the senses. Now add all the original thoughts coming from the mind itself. This adds up to an incredible amount of input for the brain to sort through. Normally the mind filters out the unimportant things so you are able to focus your attention where ever you choose. Now imagine what it would be like if your "radio" were broken and your brain paid equal attention to every bit of information coming into it! Now you have an idea what life is like for a child with ADD!

The brain's filter is called the reticular activating system. In children with ADD this system is "sleepy" and not doing its job. This is why stimulant medications help these kids. By waking up the reticular activating system they allow the child to filter input and focus their attention wherever they choose. It puts the child in charge of himself!

ADD seems to be a chemical imbalance in the brain. It is more common in some families and in children who have had certain serious medical problems but most of the time there is not obvious reason. Other problems such as learning disabilities, depression, extreme high IQ and emotional problems can all mimic ADD. A thorough physical, psychological and educational evaluation is necessary to

make the diagnosis. Ask your doctor or your school's special education teacher for advice if you are concerned.

Dr. Ferguson is a Heber City pediatrician who specializes in the care of children from birth to 18 years. If you have a question you would like Dr. Ferguson to answer in this column write to Mountainland Medical Clinic, 30 S. 500 E., Heber City, Utah 84032.

Strep

7 Mar 1985

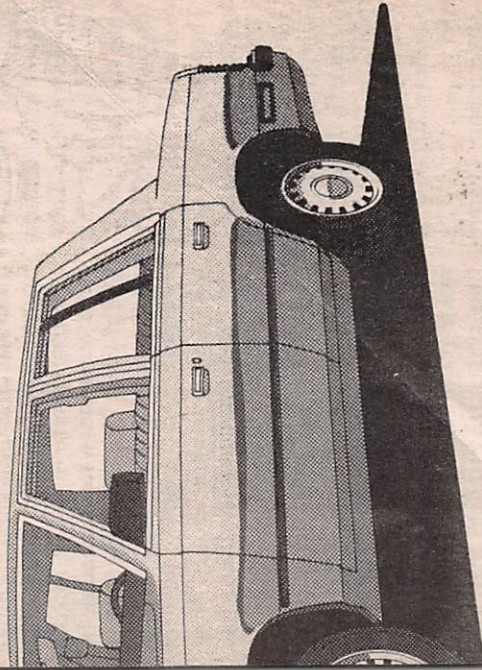
Dr. Kitty Ferguson
Wave Counselor

In my office we call it the disease of the week- whatever it is that seems to be causing most of the sickness, or strep. Strep is a bacteria which cause a wide list of problems including sinus infections, ear and tissue infections, and kidney damage, and I am seeing several dozens of throats may be followed after several weeks by rheumatic fever. Even though strep throats are usually harmless, rheumatic fever can be very serious. This is a disease where antibodies activated by the strep attack the heart muscle and can lead to permanent damage to the valves. This is why strep throats should be carefully diagnosed and treated. Fortunately, rheumatic fever is becoming rare and high fever infections under the skin (erythema nodosum) are also becoming rare.

WAVE

HEBER CITY

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in our opinion

The Wasatch Wave
Utah Press Association Member

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Co-Publisher

Susan F. Buys
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Robert W. Hicken
Managing Editor

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Strep Throats

7 Mar 1985

Dr. Kitty Ferguson
Wave Columnist

In my office we call it the disease of the week--whatever illness it is that seems to be causing most of the sickness. For about the last 3 weeks it has been strep. Strep is a bacteria that can cause a whole list of problems including sore throats, ear and sinus infections, abscesses, skin and tissue infections, and heart and kidney damage. Right now we are seeing strep throats by the dozens.

Strep throats usually come on fairly suddenly with a painful throat and high fever. Swollen lymph nodes under the jaw are usual. Headache and stomach aches may be severe. There is usually little or no runny nose or cough. There may be a fine sandpapery red rash (scarlatina) followed by peeling of the finger tips and what is best described as a "strawberry" tongue. When this appears the strep throat may be called scarlet fever.

An uncomplicated strep throat will go away in 4 or 5 days all by itself. Complications such as abscess of the tonsil or spread of infection into tissues of the neck do occur but are rare. So why bother? In some cases strep

throats may be followed after several weeks by rheumatic fever. Even though strep throats are usually harmless, rheumatic fever can be very serious. This is a disease where antibodies activated by the strep attack the heart muscle and can leave permanent damage to the valves. This is why strep throats should be carefully diagnosed and treated.

Fortunately, rheumatic fever is becoming rare. Penicillin is very effective in treating strep infections and preventing rheumatic fever. If you do get strep be sure to take your medication exactly as the doctor prescribes. It is also important to be sure what you have is really strep. Sore throats can be caused by several things other than strep. These other infections may not benefit from penicillin. In fact more people in the US die every year from allergic reactions to penicillin shots than from sore throats and rheumatic fever!

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Consider the 'Human Factor' in Decision

It is better to give than to receive. This old timers wisdom holds true to most things, but there comes a time when giving becomes take, on the part of the receiver.

Wasatch County has been giving to the federal government since the county was created.